



Women Veterans News letter

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★ NATIONAL WEAR *Red* DAY ★

February 4, 2005 celebrates the second National Wear *Red* Day. Join Americans nationwide to show your support for women for women's heart disease awareness.

Take women's health to heart by showing off your favorite red dress, shirt, red dress pin, or tie and help spread the word about women and heart disease. Heart disease is the #1 killer of American women. Continue to support women and heart disease during February, National Heart Month.

What is the Heart Truth?



_Heart disease is the #1 killer of American women.

_One in every three women die from heart disease.

_Women don't take their risk of heart disease seriously or personally.

_Women often fail to make the connection between risk factors (high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, and lack of exercise) with risk of developing heart disease.

The goal of The Heart Truth is to give women a personal and urgent wake-up call about their heart risk. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and partner organizations have sponsored this national campaign. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/>



HEART DISEASE *doesn't* CARE WHAT YOU WEAR

Updated Guidelines for Lowering Cholesterol

Recently revised national guidelines released by the National Cholesterol Education Program of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute encourage more aggressive treatment of high LDL cholesterol for many people at risk for heart attack or death for cardiovascular disease.

- For the very high risk people, it is recommended that the LDL (or "bad" cholesterol) goal be less than 70 milligrams per deciliter. Very high risk is defined as those people with cardiovascular disease plus diabetes, previous heart attack, a current smoker, poorly controlled high blood pressure, or risk factors associated with metabolic syndrome— high triglycerides, low levels of HDL (or "good" cholesterol), and obesity.
- For high risk individuals, the goal is a LDL cholesterol less than 100mg/dl. High risk is defined as those individuals with coronary artery disease, disease of the blood vessels of the brain or the extremities, a previous heart attack, angina, diabetes or two or more cardiac risk factors—a low HDL level, high blood pressure, a family history of heart disease, a current smoker, previous angioplasty or bypass surgery, a male forty five years or older or a woman fifty five years or older.
- Moderately high risk is a LDL goal less than 130 mg/dl. Health care providers have an option to lower the level to less than 100 mg/dl. Moderately high risk individuals have two or more cardiac risk factors listed above.
- Lower risk is a LDL goal less than 160 mg/dl. These people have no more than one cardiac risk factor.



Discuss your cardiac risks and your cholesterol levels with your Primary Care provider.

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Stay Warm: Your Life Could Depend on It

by Mary Calvagna, MS



Winter is full force, and with it comes the risk of hypothermia. Hypothermia, defined as below-normal body temperature, can be life-threatening if not promptly treated.

Risk Increases as You Age

Older people have an increased risk for hypothermia, according to the National Institute on Aging (NIA). As people age, the natural ability to keep warm in the cold may decrease; inactivity, illness, and certain medications make it even harder to stay warm.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Unusual changes in behavior | Confusion |
| Sleepiness | Clumsiness |
| Slurred speech | Shallow breathing |

Tips to Help You Stay Warm

Hypothermia is preventable. Tips from the NIA for older adults include:

Find out if you are at risk. Ask your doctor if the prescription or over-the-counter medications you take can affect body temperature regulation.

Dress warmly in layers of clothing, even when indoors. Hypothermia can occur in bed, so wear warm clothing to bed and use blankets.

If you get wet on even a cool fall or spring day be sure to come inside to a warm room and dry off. Remove Wet clothes as soon as you can.

Ask friends or neighbors to look in once or twice a day if you live alone. See if your local community has a telephone check-in or personal visit service.

Use alcohol moderately, if at all. And avoid alcohol altogether near bedtime. Some people think wrongly that alcohol is helpful in cold weather because it makes many people feel warm and flushed. But that warmth occurs because alcohol causes blood vessels in our hands and face to open up and draw heat from the deep parts of the body to the surface. As a result, alcohol causes us to loose heat and is a very important cause of hypothermia.

Eat hot foods and drink hot liquids to raise your body temperature and keep warm.

Set the thermostat in your home to at least 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit in living or sleeping areas. Ask your doctor if you should set your thermostat higher.

Look into fuel-assistance programs and home winterization programs. Your local utility company or area Office on Aging often has an assistance program.

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*January is
Cervical Cancer Awareness Month*

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center Committee on Cancer and The Women Veterans Committee joins the American Cancer Society to present:

Cervical Cancer Awareness

Wednesday, January 26, 2005
Nursing Home Recreation Room, Second Floor
2:00 p.m.
Louise Guszick, CRNP

ALL ARE INVITED!

